

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 00483 092245Z

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 AF-06 EA-09 NEA-10 ACDA-10 DLOS-04

OFA-01 OES-05 CG-00 DOTE-00 TRSE-00 COME-00 /135 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5766

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TAGS: PFOR, UK, AR

SUBJ: UK LETTER ON RRS SHACKLETON INCIDENT

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 6
FROM UK ACTING PERMREP TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY
COUNCIL CONCERNING THE SHACKLETON INCIDENT:

QUOTE:

S/11972

LETTER DATED 6 FEBRUARY 1976 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO
THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

UPON INSTRUCTIONS FROM MY GOVERNMENT I HAVE THE HONOUR
TO DRAW TO YOUR ATTENTION AN UNLAWFUL AND DANGEROUS ACTION
BY A WARSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA AGAINST THE
ROYAL RESEARCH SHIP SHACKLETON PEACEFULLY IN PASSAGE ON
THE HIGH SEAS. THE RRS SHACKLETON IS UNARMED AND HAS BEEN
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PAGE 02 USUN N 00483 092245Z

ENGAGED IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CONNECTED WITH THEORIES

OF CONTINENTAL DRIFT. HER PROGRAMME, WHICH HAD NO RELEVANCE TO CONTINENTAL SHELF RESOURCES, IS A BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL GEODYNAMICS PROJECT.

AT 1330 GMT (0930 LOCAL TIME) ON 4 FEBRUARY THE RRS SHACKLETON, WHICH IS KNOWN BY THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES TO BE A PUBLIC VESSEL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ENGAGED IN NON-COMMERCIAL SERVICE, WAS INTERCEPTED 87 MILES SOUTH OF CAPE PEMBROKE, FALKLAND ISLANDS, BY THE ARGENTINE DESTROYER NO. 24 ALMIRANTE STORNI. RRS SHACKLETON WAS ON COURSE TOWARDS PORT STANLEY, IN ORDER TO REFUEL, FROM A POSITION (LATITUDE 57 DEGREES 15 MINUTES SOUTH, LONGITUDE 58 DEGREES WEST) WHERE HER SUBSTNATIVE RESEARCH HAD BEEN TERMINATED. RRS SHACKLETON WAS ORDER TO STOP HER ENGINES AND ACCEPT A BOARDING PARTY. THE CAPTAIN OF THE RRS SHACKLETON DECLINED TO OBEY THIS ILLEGAL COMMAND. THE ARGENTINE WARSHIP THEN FIRED THREE SHOTS ACROSS RRS SHACKLETON'S BOWS. THE CAPTAIN OF RRS SHACKLETON INFORMED THE ARGENTINE WARSHIP THAT, IN VIEW OF THE PRESENCE ABOARD THE RRS SHACKLETON OF EXPLOSIVES FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES, FIRE DIRECTED AT THE RRS SHACKLETON COULD HAVE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES. FOLLOWING A FURTHER ILLEGAL COMMAND TO ALTER COURSE AND PROCEED TO USHAIA, A PORT IN ARGENTINA, WHICH THE RRS SHACKLETON IGNORED, THE SHIP WAS STRADDLED BY TWO FURTHER SHOTS AND WARNED THAT THE NEXT SHOT WOULD HIT THE SHIP. RRS SHACKLETON CONTINUED ON COURSE FOR PORT STANLEY, WHICH SHE REACHED AT 1945 GMT. THE ALMIRANTE STORNI, WHICH HAD BEEN JOINED BY A FOUR-ENGINED AIRCRAFT, FOLLOWED THE RRS SHACKLETON AS FAR AS A POINT 8 MILES OFF CAPE PEMBROKE.

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT REJECT THE ARGENTINE CLAIMS TO EXERCISE MARITIME JURISDICTION OF ANY KIND IN THE AREA IN WHICH THESE ACTS OCCURRED. BUT IT IS TO BE OBSERVED THAT THE ACTION OF THE ARGENTINE VESSEL WOULD HAVE BEEN UNLAWFUL IN RESPECT OF A PUBLIC VESSEL OF ANOTHER STATE, OR ANY OTHER VESSEL OF ANOTHER STATE, EVEN IF, UNLIKE THE PRESENT CASE, IT HAD BEEN WITHIN THE TERRITORIAL SEA OF OTHER MARITIME JURISDICTION OF ARGENTINA.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 USUN N 00483 092245Z

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT DEPLORE THIS PROVOCATIVE INCIDENT, AND CALL UPON THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO REFRAIN UTTERLY FROM ANY FURTHER HARASSMENT ON THE HIGH SEAS OF PEACEFUL VESSELS IN CONTRAVENTION OF RECOGNIZED INTERNATIONAL LAW.

FINALLY, HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REQUEST, AT A LATER STAGE, THAT THE SECURITY

COUNCIL SHOULD TAKE THE APPROPRIATE ACTION IN RESPECT
OF THIS UNLAWFUL AND VIOLENT ACTION BY AN ARGENTINE
WARSHIP ON THE HIGH SEAS.

I HAVE THE HONOUR TO REQUEST THAT THIS LETTER BE
CIRCULATED AS AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

(SIGNED) JAMES MURRAY
ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO
THE UNITED NATIONS.

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